

# FACT SHEET



United States  
Department of Energy  
Grand Junction Office

June 2000

## U.S. Department of Energy Proposes To Transfer Former Monticello Mill Tailings Site to the City of Monticello, Utah

*The U.S. Department of Energy Grand Junction Office has proposed to transfer a 383.24-acre parcel of land to the City of Monticello. This parcel will be transferred prior to completion of remediation and restoration of the millsite. This fact sheet provides a description of the proposed land transfer.*

### Background

The original mill at Monticello, Utah, was built in 1942 to provide an additional supply of vanadium during World War II. The mill was modified in the early 1950s to process uranium ore. Milling continued intermittently until the early 1960s, when the mill was dismantled.

Tailings are the sandlike material that remains after processing of ore. Uranium tailings contain naturally occurring materials that radioactively decay to radium and then to radon, a radioactive gas. Tailings and uranium ore contaminated properties in and around the City of Monticello. Tailings were dispersed by wind and water from the millsite and residual ore remained from hauling and stockpiling operations.

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) entered into an agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the State of Utah Department of Environmental Quality to clean up tailings under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). Cleanup of the

contaminated soils has been completed. A total of 2.5 million cubic yards of tailings and tailings-contaminated materials were placed in a permanent repository south of the millsite.

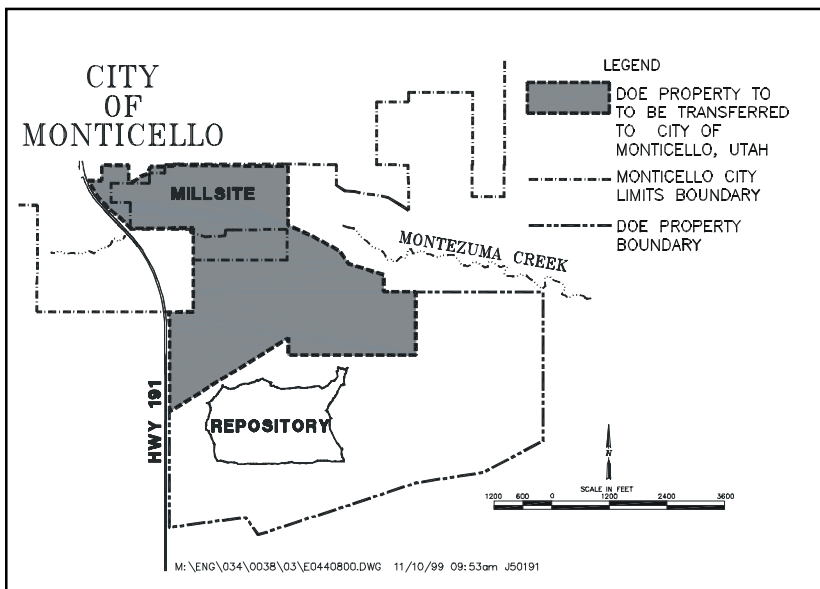
DOE has completed the removal of contaminated soils at the former millsite and the surrounding properties, although a final remedial action has not been selected for surface and ground waters. The ground water, under a portion of the property, has contaminant levels above applicable standards that are being addressed by an interim remedial action. Because a final remedy for the surface and ground waters has not been selected and implemented, the Monticello Mill Tailings Site has not been deleted from the National Priorities List. A final Record of Decision for remediation of surface and ground waters is scheduled for August 2005.

### Transfer of Federal Lands

DOE is proposing to transfer 383 acres of land to the City of Monticello prior to completing the millsite restoration and the selection of the final remedy for surface and ground waters.

EPA has developed guidance that assists in determining if a site is suitable for transfer before the completion of the remedial action and deletion of the site from the National Priorities List. This guidance requires the Lead Agency to prepare a Covenant Deferral Request in accordance with CERCLA section 120(h)(3)(c) demonstrating that the land is suitable for early transfer. The Monticello properties can be transferred after EPA, with the Utah Governor's concurrence, determines that the transfer of the property is consistent with the protection of human health and the environment.

DOE, EPA, and the Utah Department of Environmental Quality sought public comment on the suitability of the transfer of the proposed property for recreational purposes. The Covenant Deferral Request also requires that DOE ensure that restoration of the millsite is completed and that restrictive easements and institutional



DOE Property Proposed for Transfer to City of Monticello

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controls are maintained on the subject property. DOE will also conduct any needed response action for surface and ground waters determined to be necessary in the final Record of Decision.

DOE is proposing to transfer the 383.24-acre parcel of land to the City of Monticello under the Federal Lands-to-Parks Program. The property proposed for transfer is the former Monticello millsite and adjacent government-owned properties that are included in the Monticello Mill Tailings National Priorities Listed Site. The City of Monticello plans to use the property for expansion of recreational facilities for the use of its citizens and the general public. Potential future uses of the land proposed for transfer could include picnic areas, walking trails, and open space.

## **Cooperative Agreement**

DOE has been working with the City of Monticello on the transfer of this property to the city for recreational use. DOE and the City of Monticello signed a Cooperative Agreement that establishes the responsibilities of the two agencies in completing restoration of the land. Discussions with the City of Monticello led to a decision to allow the city to complete the restoration of the property in accordance with designs that let the city configure the lands to its proposed recreational uses. The final designs being prepared by the city must be concurred upon by DOE, EPA, and Utah Department of Environmental Quality prior to implementation of the restoration.

The cooperative agreement and the Covenant Deferral Request allows DOE continued access to the property to conduct monitoring and surveillance activities, as well as to conduct any final remedy that may be determined to be necessary in the final Record of Decision for surface and ground waters. An interim remedial action, including the construction of a pilot-scale treatability study, a permeable reactive barrier to treat contaminants in the ground water, was implemented in 1999.

Until the cleanup levels to be established in the surface and ground water Record of Decision have been achieved, DOE will ensure that the use of the ground and surface waters contaminated by the former milling operation is restricted. This use restriction will be enforced through required deed restrictions on the land being transferred to the City of Monticello. The deed restrictions will ensure protection of human health and the environment, while allowing the city to put the transferred lands to beneficial public use.

## **Federal Lands-to-Parks Program**

Through the Federal Lands-to-Parks Program, State and local agencies can acquire land and facilities at no cost to meet park and recreational needs. Since 1949, more than 1,200 properties have been recycled into parks and recreation areas in the 50 States. Sites or buildings obtained through this program must be open to the public and used exclusively for parks and recreational activities. The Federal Lands-to-Parks Program provides diverse recreation opportunities for people of all ages.

Periodically, the General Services Administration identifies properties the Federal Government no longer needs and initiates a formal process to dispose of them under the authority of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949. Properties are first screened for potential use by other Federal agencies. When properties are not needed by a Federal agency, they are declared surplus and are then reviewed for a variety of State or local public uses.

Properties or portions of properties that are surplus to Federal needs may be made available to States or local agencies at no cost for parks and recreation through application to the Federal Lands-to-Parks Program. The National Park Service and General Services Administration notify States and local governments when properties become available in their areas.

Properties transferred under the Federal Lands-to-Parks Program must be used according to the terms of the transfer in perpetuity, although these terms may be amended by mutual agreement.

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